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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Conserving the Nature of America

*USFWS/  
John and Karen Hollingsworth*



*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.*

USFWS/Dave Menke

## Why We Do It...

### Conserving the Nature of America

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service helps protect a healthy environment for people, fish and wildlife, and helps Americans conserve and enjoy the outdoors



*American Toad*  
USFWS/Karen Hollingsworth



*Wildlife Observation*  
USFWS/Karen Hollingsworth



*Canoeing on Refuge*  
USFWS/Ryan Hagerty



*Pintail Duck*  
USFWS/George Gentry



*Rocky Mountain Columbine*  
USFWS/Dr. Thomas G. Barnes



*Waterfowl Hunting*  
USFWS/Mike Hemming

*Conservation is for Today and the Future*

USFWS/Carl Zitzmann



*Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle*  
USFWS

## For More Information

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Headquarters**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 22040  
[www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

### Pacific Region

911 NE 11th Avenue Portland, Oregon 97232 -4181

AS, GU, HI, ID, OR, WA

### Southwest Region

500 Gold Avenue SW, Room 3018 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

AZ, NM, OK, TX

### Great Lakes - Big Rivers Region

Federal Building  
1 Federal Drive  
Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111 -4056

IL, IN, MI, MN, MO, OH, WI

### Southeast Region

1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 410 Atlanta, Georgia 30345

AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, PR, VI

### Northeast Region

300 Westgate Center Drive  
Hadley, Massachusetts 01035-9589

CT, DE, DC, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, WV

### Mountain - Prairie Region

134 Union Boulevard  
Lakewood, Colorado 80228

CO, KS, MT, ND, NE, SD, UT, WY

### Alaska Region

1011 East Tudor Road Anchorage Alaska 99503

AK

### Pacific Southwest Region

Klamath River Basin  
2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-206  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846

CA, NV

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## *Who We Are...*

### **A Conservation Legacy**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the only agency of the U.S. Government whose primary responsibility is fish, wildlife, and plant conservation.

The Service helps protect a healthy environment for people, fish and wildlife, and helps Americans conserve and enjoy the outdoors and our living treasures. The Service's major responsibilities are for migratory birds, endangered species, certain marine mammals, and freshwater and anadromous fish.

### **Over 125 Years of Service**

The Service's origins date back to 1871, when Congress established the U.S. Fish Commission to study the decrease of the nation's food fishes and recommend ways to reverse the decline. Meanwhile, in 1885, Congress created an Office of Economic Ornithology in the Department of Agriculture. The office studied the food habits and migratory patterns of birds, especially those that had an effect on agriculture. This office gradually grew in responsibilities and went through several name changes until finally renamed the Bureau of Biological Survey in 1905.

In addition to studying birds and mammals, the Survey's responsibilities included managing

*Mallard*  
*USFWS/Erwin &*  
*Peggy Bauer*



*Brown Bear*  
*USFWS/Larry Aumiller*

the nation's first wildlife refuges, controlling predators, enforcing wildlife laws, and conserving dwindling populations of migratory birds. The Bureaus of Fisheries and Biological Survey were transferred to the Department of the Interior in 1939. In 1940, they were combined and named the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Further reorganization came in 1956 when the Fish and Wildlife Act created the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and established two bureaus, Sport Fish and Wildlife and Commercial Fisheries. In 1970, the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries was transferred to the Department of Commerce and renamed the National Marine Fisheries Service.

For many years the Service was the principal federal wildlife and fisheries research agency. In the 1940's, Service research biologists conducted some of the first investigations into the effects of the pesticide DDT in wildlife. Service researchers also revealed the life cycle of the parasite that causes whirling disease in trout. In addition, Service biologists developed many of the captive breeding techniques that have benefitted such rare species as whooping cranes, California condors and black-footed ferrets. The Service's research function briefly became an independent agency and was eventually reorganized as part of the U.S. Geological Survey in 1996.

Notable former employees include Jay N. "Ding" Darling, designer of the first Federal Duck Stamp, and Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring*.

Today, the Service employs approximately 7,500 people at facilities across the country including a headquarters office in Washington,

*Red-bellied  
Tree Duck*  
USFWS/Glen Smart



*1st Duck Stamp*









D.C., seven regional offices, and nearly 700 field units. Among these are national wildlife refuges, national fish hatcheries and management assistance offices, law enforcement and ecological services field stations.

### *What We Do...*

#### **Over 550 National Wildlife Refuges**

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the world's largest and most diverse collection of lands set aside specifically for wildlife. The refuge system began in 1903, when President Theodore Roosevelt designated 3-acre Pelican Island, a pelican and heron rookery in Florida, as a bird sanctuary. Today, more than 550 National Wildlife Refuges and 37 Wetland Management Districts have been established from the Arctic Ocean to the South Pacific, from Maine to the Caribbean. Varying in size from half-acre parcels to thousands of square miles, they encompass more than 150 million acres of America's best wildlife habitats. The vast majority of these lands are in Alaska, with the rest spread across the United States and several U.S. territories.

#### **Migratory Bird Conservation**

Because many bird species fly thousands of miles in their annual migrations, they cannot be effectively conserved by any single state or nation, but only through cooperative efforts. The Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for migratory bird conservation under several laws and international treaties with Canada, Mexico, Japan, and the former Soviet Union. This includes the conservation of more than 800 species of migratory birds. The Service regulates migratory bird hunting and studies populations. It also monitors and promotes the conservation of songbirds and other nongame species.

*Bald cypress  
knees rising from  
swamp water  
USFWS/Ned Trovillion*

## Biological Expertise

The Fish and Wildlife Service provides expert biological advice to other federal agencies, states, industry, Native American tribes and members of the public concerning the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plant habitat that may be affected by development activities. Working through field offices located throughout the country, Service personnel assess the potential effects of projects that require federal funding or permits, such as dredge and fill activities, dams and reservoirs, oil leasing, energy projects, and federal highways. Service biologists recommend ways to avoid, minimize, or compensate for harmful impacts on fish and wildlife resources. Service personnel also assess the effects of contaminants on fish and wildlife.

## Fish Conservation and Restoration

One of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's most important duties is to conserve populations of fish and other aquatic species, and to protect and restore the habitats these species



*Newly Hatched  
Salmon  
USFWS*

need. Service fisheries biologists, operating from a nationwide network of Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance Offices, National Fish Hatcheries, Fish Technology Centers, and Fish Health Centers, have a wealth of expertise in aquatic resource conservation. Through its

*Lee Erickson,  
Columbia  
FWCO, hefts a  
pallid sturgeon  
USFWS/Jeff Finley*







efforts, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service helps safeguard fisheries worth billions of dollars, rescues troubled aquatic species on the brink of extinction, and provides opportunities for anglers and others to enjoy the outdoors.

### **Endangered Species Recovery**

Another major function of the Fish and Wildlife Service is the identification and protection of endangered species. About 1,200 domestic species are currently on the federal list of endangered and threatened species. As part of their responsibilities, Service biologists work with scientists from other federal and state agencies, universities, Native American tribes and private organizations to develop “recovery plans” that identify actions needed to save listed species and restore their numbers. Recovery programs may include research, habitat preservation and management, captive breeding, law enforcement, reintroduction of depleted species into suitable areas of their historic range, and other activities.

### **Conserving Ecosystems**

Through its “ecosystem approach” adopted in 1994, the Service works to achieve landscape-level conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats through coordination among all Service programs and field stations, and through partnerships with other agencies, organizations and individuals. The Service identified 53 ecosystem units based on U.S. Geological Survey watersheds and has established teams to address important conservation issues in each ecosystem.

## Partnerships

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program works with private landowners who want to restore fish and wildlife habitat. Since 1987, the



*Co-op Farming*  
USFWS/  
Karen Hollingsworth

Service has established nearly 20,000 cooperative agreements with private land owners to restore habitat on private land. So far, partners in the program have restored more than 400,000 acres of wetlands, 300,000 acres of native prairie and grassland, and 2,000 miles of stream-side corridors. In recent years, the Service has maintained a waiting list of approximately 2,000 landowners nationwide interested in this cost-shared program.



*Silver Spotted  
Skipper on Wild  
Bergamot*  
USFWS/  
Dr. Thomas G. Barnes

## Working Around the World

The Service conserves fish and wildlife worldwide under some 40 treaties, statutes, and agreements. The Service also cooperates with other countries on wildlife research

*Illegal Wildlife  
Products*  
USFWS/Carl Zitzmann





and management programs, and responds to requests from foreign countries for technical assistance. The Service's goal is to help cooperating countries develop their conservation capabilities in order to meet their own environmental goals and needs on a sustainable basis. Among the Service's international programs are graduate education programs for fish and wildlife managers in Latin America, environmental education in the Near East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and special conservation efforts for tigers, rhinoceroses, and African elephants.



*African  
Elephant*  
USFWS/Gary M. Stolz

The Service also works with other countries to preserve their native wildlife and plants through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The United States is one of more than 145 countries that now belong to this international treaty aimed at preventing overexploitation of rare wildlife from commercial trade.

### **Law Enforcement**

The Service's Law Enforcement operations support the entire range of its wildlife conservation programs.

Service special agents and wildlife inspectors enforce wildlife laws and treaty obligations. Special agents

*Fishing-  
Help Our Kids  
Catch a Dream*  
USFWS/Carl Zitzmann





investigate cases ranging from individual migratory bird hunting violations to large-scale poaching and illegal trafficking in protected wildlife. Working in cooperation with

U.S. Customs and Department of Agriculture inspectors, Service wildlife inspectors monitor wildlife trade and stop illegal shipments of protected plants and animals. The Service operates the world's most comprehensive wildlife forensics laboratory, where Service experts analyze evidence to help investigators solve wildlife crimes.



*Checking  
Hunting License  
USFWS/Tupper Blake*

### **Helping Tribes, States and Citizens**

In accordance with its 1994 Native American policy, the Service maintains a government to government relationship and observes federal trust responsibilities with the Indian community. Through cooperative agreements, memoranda of understanding, and other relationships, the Service works with Native American tribes to help conserve wolves and other species, operate fish hatcheries, and manage migratory birds. In all its programs, the Service strives to respect the cultural values of the Indian community and recognize the individuality and sovereignty of each Indian nation.

*Sandhill  
Crane Colt  
USFWS/William Radke*



Two additional laws administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service — the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act — provide federal grant money to support specific projects carried out by state fish and wildlife agencies. The money comes from federal excise taxes paid by hunters, anglers and boaters on sporting arms and ammunition, archery equipment, sport fishing tackle, motorboat fuels and import duties on fishing tackle and pleasure boats.

States use the funds to acquire land for wildlife habitat and for fishing and other recreation; conduct research; provide access to hunting, fishing, and boating areas; manage and maintain fish and wildlife habitats; and carry out hunting safety training and aquatic education.



*Partnerships  
Yield Greater  
Benefits for All  
USFWS/Ryan Hagerty*

### **Career Opportunities**

Working for the Fish and Wildlife Service is more than a career.

It is also a commitment—one shared by more than 7,500 men and women representing a wide range of professions, trades, and specialties. To accomplish its mission, the Service employs many of the country's best biologists, wildlife managers, engineers, realty specialists, law enforcement agents, and others working to assure that

*Big Horned  
Sheep  
USFWS/  
Karen Hollingsworth*





future generations of Americans will be able to enjoy nature's beauty and bounty. For information on working for the Service, contact the Regional office nearest you.



*Louisiana Black  
Bear Research  
USFWS/Mark Chesna*

### **Opportunities for the Public**

Thousands of Americans volunteer with the Service each year. Working side-by-side with Service employees, volunteers serve as tour guides and educators and help with management activities such as bird banding, habitat restoration, wildlife population surveys, building trails, and staffing visitor centers. Many



*Volunteer  
on Refuge  
USFWS/  
Karen Hollingsworth*

citizens also join "Friends" groups that support national wildlife refuges in their community. There are also many opportunities for citizens to comment on major Service actions and the development of management plans for Service facilities. To learn more, check our web site or contact a Service office near you.

*Wood Duck  
USFWS/Steve Maslowski*



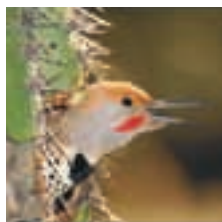
## Laws We Carry Out

The Fish and Wildlife Service administers and enforces a number of conservation laws and treaties. Among them are:

- The Lacey Act, (1900) which prohibits the interstate or international shipment of illegally taken wildlife.
- The Migratory Bird Treaty Act, (1918) which bans the take, possession, purchase, sale, or barter of any migratory bird, including feathers, parts, nests, or eggs.
- The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act, (1934) which requires all waterfowl hunters age 16 and over to possess a Federal Duck Stamp.
- The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, (1937) which provides Federal excise taxes on hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies for restoration of wild birds and animals; acquisition, development and management of wildlife habitats; hunter education and development and management of shooting ranges.
- The Eagle Protection Act, (1940) which prohibits the import, export, take, sale, purchase, or barter of bald and golden eagles.
- The Endangered Species Act, (1973) which provides for the listing, protection and recovery of endangered and threatened fish, wildlife and plants.
- The Wild Bird Conservation Act, (1992) which addresses problems with the international trade in wild-caught birds.



*Fishing license compliance check*  
USFWS



*Northern Flicker*  
USFWS/  
Denny Bingaman



*Red Wolf Pups*  
USFWS/George Gentry

*Sandhill Cranes,  
Bosque del Apache*  
USFWS/Virginia Heitmen

■ The Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, (1950) which provides federal excise taxes on fishing and boating equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies for sport fish management, boating access, and aquatic education projects.



*Manatee*

*USFWS/James Powell*

■ The Marine Mammal Protection Act, (1972) which establishes a moratorium on the taking and importing of marine mammals, such as sea otter, walrus, polar bear, dugong, and manatee.

■ The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), (1975) which regulates the importation, exportation, and re-exportation of thousands of species protected under its three appendices.



*Seized Cockatoos*

*USFWS/*

*Steve Hillebrand*

■ The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, (1997) which establishes wildlife conservation as the fundamental mission of the refuge system. The Act also recognizes wildlife-dependent recreational uses involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation as the priority public uses of the Refuge System



*Environmental Education*

*USFWS/*

*Karen Hollingsworth*





